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Gandhism and Socialism

A STUDY AND COMPARISON

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BY

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"There is a saying in India that to see through Maya (illusion) is to destroy her. But few realize how literally this is true. The disaster or difficulty that has ceased to confuse and bewilder us, is about to be defeated. The evil about which we can think and express ourselves clearly, has already lost its power. To measure our defeat accurately is to reverse it. When a people, as a people, are united in straight and steady understanding of their circumstances, without doubt and without illusion, then events are about to precipitate themselves."

—*From one of Sister Nivedita's essays.*

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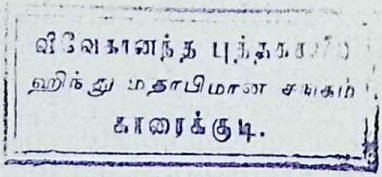

Gandhism and Socialism

Most people think that the world is governed by institutions and organizations such as political governments and banks, or by laws, or by certain groups of people or ruling classes. But really the control is deeper and more subtle than that. Governments, banks, laws, and ruling classes are only the exterior instruments of management. The real control comes from ideas and sentiments,—a scheme of values, a set of ideals or activities which people are induced to desire and accept as right, fitting and praiseworthy. The most important adjunct of this control,—even more important than organizations,—is a set of symbols which indicate and stand for the given system of values. Thus we see that the real control of society is psychological, through men's minds and feelings. Even where government is maintained partly by physical force of soldiers and police, the control is psychological through the fear created by such force.

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In all ages hitherto, States have governed partly by physical force, and used displays of soldiers and police as threats or symbols of such force. The ceremonial of courts of law is in part a veiled, elaborate and prolonged suggestion or symbol of such force, adapted to calmer times. Feudalism in Europe was a system of values and symbols. Again, in medieval Europe the Church ruled through a set of religious values, rewards and punishments, symbolized by crosses, holy relics, religious ceremonies, buildings and regalia of various kinds. Even today we are governed by systems of values and by symbols, though they are so familiar that we do not usually recognize them as such or realize how they operate on us.

There is not necessarily anything sinister in all this. It is a condition found in all nations. It grows out of the nature of mankind. The fact that we have minds and senses, and are capable of purposes and ideals, means that everyone has aims, a set of purposes that seem to him desirable, a scheme of values. Our sensory equipment and psychological nature make symbolism inevitable. Symbols are a necessary tool. We have an infinite number of symbols. Words and numbers, ceremonials of many sorts, gestures and costumes are examples of symbols that are used by everyone. A well-known psychologist has said that symbols are stimulators

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and carriers of emotional and intellectual energy. The use of flags in patriotic assemblies is a good example of this truth.

Thus man is guided and ruled primarily through his mind and heart. The rulers of mankind have always been those who were wise or skilful enough to create and develop a scheme of values which was acceptable to the mass of people, and a set of symbols which seemed to represent or signify reality better than any other set of symbols, and corresponded adequately to the vision into the nature of reality held by the majority of people at that time.

But systems of values and sets of symbols have their history. When first created they may be very useful, adequate and effective for all groups and individuals. They develop and become more complex and powerful. As centuries roll on and circumstances change, the values weaken and lose their attraction, the symbols become less adequate to express new interpretations of reality or to suit new needs,—less faithful to the ideal subject matter. Or perhaps the symbols are taken and manipulated by selfish groups for narrow or corrupt purposes. Though our nature requires us always to have some scheme of values and symbols, yet, in order to keep them from making trouble, they must be periodically criticized, corrected, adjusted, or completely changed to meet changing in-

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sights and new circumstances and new truths. But this is difficult because people hate to change their habits of thinking and feeling as well as of action.

When systems of value and their symbolisms are taken over by a small selfish group as a means of controlling society for the benefit of the few, the values and symbols are used to create divisions and a set of nearly balanced oppositions among the other groups in the population. Thus the mass of people are broken into opposed groups and blinded by the apparent conflict of interests, so that they do not understand what is being done to them. The ruling group plays upon the ambitions, greeds, vanities, prides and fears of the other groups, and manipulates the symbols so that the few shall always keep supreme power for their own selfish ends, no matter what changes of outward form occur. Only a very few even of the ruling class are clever enough to understand fully the operation of such value systems and how they may be warped and used, but all the ruling class are shrewd enough to take advantage of the opportunities thus created and try to maintain the system. When such an arrangement gets well established, most members of both the ruling and ruled groups take part in it, accept it all as the natural state of affairs, and are not aware of the real purpose and effect of all they are doing. The ruling group

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even invent appropriate systems of morality, such as the ideas of "noblesse oblige," or trusteeship, or intellectual explanations about superiority, (such as exaggerated theories of heredity or of race, or false standards or tests of intelligence), which tend to gloss over the artificiality of the inequalities and injustices created by the system, and make them seem natural, necessary and inevitable. Within the framework of their ideas and values, such people are often sincere, conscientious and kind hearted. But they have deceived themselves as well as the others.

Of all these schemes of value, the most powerful and widespread at thepresent day is money. It is used by every race and nation,—indeed by almost every tribe or small group in the world. Its symbols are coins, or paper notes, share certificates, bonds, or other evidences of financial credit or obligation. The controllers and manipulators of these money symbols,—the bankers and financiers,—understand very thoroughly the handling of these symbols, and are very clever. They are nowadays more powerful than political rulers. Money valuation and its symbols dominate and use all other valuations and symbols. The control of credit is the invisible government of nations. Vast multitudes of individuals spend the major part of their time and energy trying to amass money. It is notorious that parliaments, legislatures,

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political ministers, presidents and governors do the bidding of great financial interests. The actions of the churches of the West during the Great War is clear indication of how finance and politics dominate the church. The money power controls industry, commerce, education and even science itself. One reason why money is more powerful than other symbolisms is because it is quantitative and measurable and thus enlists mathematics to its aid, while other symbolisms are but slightly or not at all mathematical. Also money has become more closely linked with all the economic activities of man than earlier symbolisms have been.

All over the world people of all sorts are growing discontented under this system of money valuation. The wealthy as well as the poor, the intelligent as well as the stupid, the educated as well as the ignorant, are frustrated and unhappy. Many are seeking new and truer values. There can be no doubt that this system of values has grave defects. The symbolism of money grows less and less adequate to meet the needs of individuals and of society.

If we understand the inner meaning of money,—the most powerful of all symbols and systems of value,—we can then understand more clearly the meaning of Gandhiji's full programme.

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The economists tell us that money fulfils at least five functions:—

1. A common medium of exchange;
2. A common measure by which the comparative values of those exchanges are estimated;
3. A standard for estimating the present value of a future act, payment or obligation;
4. A store of value;
5. An agency for transmitting value from place to place.

Perhaps all of these functions are possible because money is a symbol of credit, that is to say, of human trust, faith and confidence in relation to human needs and desires. A gold or silver coin or a government note for ten rupees does its work because we all have faith that almost everyone will want it enough to be willing at any time to give us in exchange for it some of the things we desire. By virtue of this element of trust we are able to use money as a common medium of exchange, a common measure of value, a store of value, and as an agency for transmitting value from place to place.

Perhaps the two most powerful and also the two most defective and harmful functions of money are its use as a symbol of trust and as a store of value. Why is this? Let us see.

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When I work for an employer, if I am wise I try to earn his trust and confidence in my skill, strength, knowledge, zeal, perseverance, honesty, desire to serve, etc. If I can gain his trust and reliance, then I can be sure that he will express that trust by its usual symbol,—that is to say, will pay me in money. (The case of exploitation we will consider separately in just a minute.) But if the trust is real and deep, he cannot express it all by one symbol, nor can he express it all immediately or at one time. Full expression may take years. He will express other parts of it by perhaps giving me more responsible positions, or by affording various useful opportunities to me, or by occasional presents, or by hospitality, or by general friendliness.

Trust is a very deep, far-reaching, powerful, creative affair, and yet very complex, subtle and sensitive. Real trust is spontaneous. It cannot be demanded or forced or precisely measured. Confidence and expectation call forth sympathetic response and action from others, and if sustained, gradually build up great and prolonged activities. Unselfish service begets gratitude. Trust begets trust. Thus groups and communities are knit together in co-operative feeling and action. Indeed, group life of all kinds and sizes requires mutual trust for existence and prosperity. Such mutual trust is the greatest

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part of the psychological wealth of a nation. Without it, material wealth is of little value.

I will be foolish if I insist upon my employer expressing all his trust in me by means of money symbols only. Only a small part of either the quality or extent of human trust can be expressed by means of money. If I try to insist upon such a limited expression, the money symbol becomes rigid; it acts mechanically like an axe to trim off and cripple the trust, and like a sieve to strain away the finer feelings associated with trust which give it quality and help to sustain its existence. My employer feels that I care more for that one symbol than I do for the reality behind it; he may be hurt by or resent my refusal to accept his perhaps warmer and more personal expressions of feeling; and he begins to doubt my discrimination and appreciation of intangible but important matters; and hence he considers my trustworthiness limited. Thus the basis of his trust begins to weaken, and it may crumble away entirely.

If the employer cares more for money profit than anything else, his actions soon reveal that fact to the employee. The employer, preferring the symbol to the reality of human trust, will, for the sake of obtaining immediate money, often omit acts which would create long-abiding trust, or do things that actually prevent trust or

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cause doubt and mistrust. The action and reaction of feeling is much the same as when the employee lays too much stress on money. In this case the employer puts his confidence in the metallic or paper symbol rather than in the intangible and more slow appearing human feeling and relationship. His passion for counting misleads him into thinking that what can be measured is more sure and certain than feelings and attitudes which cannot be measured. He wants the entire relationship to be evaluated in terms of conventional financial accounting. He foolishly thinks that what cannot be expressed sooner or later (and preferably sooner) in money is of no importance. He ceases to extend full trust to the employee, and naturally the employee soon ceases to trust him. Then we have the relationship of exploiter and exploited, or, if it is on an international scale, of economic imperialism. Disputes arise, and then dislike, fear and hatred. When the inner reality of trustful feeling goes, the whole relationship, symbols and all, breaks down. In such a situation trust cannot grow again between the parties unless there is a complete change of inner attitude, especially on the part of the more powerful of the two. This is what Gandhiji calls a change of heart. No outward change of form will do. The reality of the relationship is inward, a matter of psychological attitude. If there is a real inner change, it

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cannot help expressing itself in action which will be convincing to the other party. Renewal of trust cannot be forced or demanded or requested. It will come spontaneously if and when the inner change proves itself fully in action.

This explains one reason why capitalism becomes more and more defective. Those who live for a long time in it become so absorbed by money valuations that they tend to care more for the symbol than for the reality, more for money than for warm human trust and the feelings associated with it. Money must be attended to before these other things which are apt to seem of secondary importance. Such people have looked upon money as a store of value, and try more to accumulate a fund of money than a fund of human trust and friendliness. By concentrating and insisting upon measuring and evaluating all human activities and expression in terms of one symbol,—money,—they eventually find that symbol failing them and mistrust and discontent steadily increasing. The symbol grows shaky and of less and less use.

In the light of this, how does Gandhiji's work and programme appear? For years he has served the poor, especially the peasants. He has helped them in times of famine, flood, disease and economic distress. He has

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developed the work of charkha and khaddar, and thus given them bread.

He has helped to remove the burdens of the outcastes and untouchables. He has lived in great simplicity, eating no more than necessary to live in health, wearing no more than the poorest in the land wear, giving all his time to public service, going to jail again and again for the people's cause, proving by his manner of life his unity with them. Every day he does manual work for the poor. He has tried to serve all groups and all classes, and to bring harmony, unity, freedom and better days to India. Thus he has created an immense fund of trust and faith among the people. By Satyagraha and khaddar he has taught the people to have faith and confidence in themselves and in their own strength, ability and power as well as in himself. Bankers create financial credit; Gandhiji creates moral trust, faith and credit. The symbols that the bankers use are coins and paper instruments of financial obligation. The symbols that Gandhiji uses are the wearing of khadi, simplicity of living, service to all who need him or come to him for aid. He asks his followers to do likewise. His programme can free India only if his followers widely engage in similar social service all over the land. Under this programme the future rulers of India cannot be relatively idle or parasitic. They will be

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those who work most unselfishly and effectively for the general welfare. Under his programme, the credit (trustworthiness) of individuals will be much less in control of banks. Each person or group will create and maintain their own amount of trustworthiness by their own quality and quantity of service.

When Mahatmaji left prison in 1924 and gave up politics and devoted himself entirely to social and economic public service, many British politicians said, "Gandhi has shot his bolt. He will no longer be a force in politics." But Mahatmaji's work was building up an immense fund of confidence among the masses. When in 1930 he called upon them, —drew upon this fund of moral credit,—the world was astounded at the response. Who were the greater politicians and statesmen, the British or Gandhiji?

Thus we see that Mahatmaji's programme, if fully carried out by individuals everywhere, will result in widespread, actual, constructive work for the poor in villages and cities everywhere. It will generate immense funds of mutual trust, confidence, unity and harmony among and between all groups, classes and communities, and thus provide the foundation for a finer, wealthier and greater nation. This explains the remark made by someone that what the Indian National Congress now wants is not leaders

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but workers. His programme lays stress upon the importance and value of village life. In such small groups people can readily know each other well, and thus mutual trust is easier and more prevalent. In Indian villages the traditions of inter-group service and barter and payment in kind are still sufficiently strong so that the growth of this new form of trust will be understood and used to its full worth. Thus we see that Gandhiji's full programme will tend to supplant that part of the capitalistic money system which tries or tends to canalize all trust into the form of money credit and to put that in the control of financiers and governments. Money tokens will remain useful as a medium of exchange and a partial measure of certain economic values. But as a store of value and a symbol of credit, money is destined to wane in power under Mahatmaji's full programme. The programme restores reality to economic, political and social relationships, and corrects a symbolism which has gone wrong. The most powerful of all modern symbols and schemes of value will be weakened and will be corrected or replaced by symbols, values and modes of activity that are nearer to human realities. True trust is created not by the issue of coins or pieces of paper by a bank or government, but by unselfish service. In relation to such trust, every man will, so to say, become his own banker, will control the extent to which

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people trust him. Money will not act as a store of such value.

After money, the next most powerful and frequently used means of government is physical violence, with its appropriate set of symbols,—uniforms, martial music, military parades, display of arms, etc. That controls people by fear and prestige of the power of violence. Furthermore, the participation of the people in wars or in counter-violence thwarts them as much as the violence used against them by the State. By being violent themselves, the people tacitly make a fundamental agreement with the ruling class,—namely that violence is the surest way of settling conflict. Thus they accept the system of violence values, and thereby are bound and restrained by it, and hence must do the will of those most skilful with the weapons of violence. By fully accepting any scheme of values and its symbols, one is at the mercy of those who are most experienced and skilled in the use of those values and their symbols.

Under Gandhiji's programme, Satyagraha does away with such fear and prestige and deprives that system of values and symbols of their former power. The ruling classes may control the guns, soldiers, navy, airplanes, poison gas, police and courts, but disciplined mass Satyagraha abolishes the customary results of those things and lowers

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the morale of the violent attackers. Satyagraha will enable the people to control not only political governments but also industrialists and financiers. It is more powerful and creative than a strike. It compels industrialists and financiers to realize that domineering methods and control by money symbols will no longer work. It will bring about a fundamental change of inner attitude by psychological influences which are too complex to be discussed here.* The full political implications of satyagraha need not be discussed here because India so well understands its power.

Some conservatives may say that satyagraha is sedition. But modern Great Britain grew from the sedition of Oliver Cromwell. The United States developed from the sedition of George Washington and those who were with him. Modern Italy rests upon the sedition of Garibaldi. Probably every modern State is the result of sedition. When sedition is successful, it is considered heroism by all. Apparently even conservatives consider it wicked only when it is incomplete or unsuccessful. Non-violent sedition has none of the moral stigma conceivably applicable to violent sedition. Sedition and violence are different. Therefore to attempt to brandish mere sedition as a term of gene-

* See *Gandhiji's Satyagraha* by R. B. Gregg, Ganesan, Madras, 1930. Rs. 2-8-0.

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ral moral reproach is simply evidence of lack of discrimination, prejudice and anger.

Some may say that Satyagraha means anarchy. Not so. Anarchy means lack of any government or control. But Satyagraha requires, and in practice secures, very great self-control, steadiness, discipline, order and co-operation from its users. These qualities do not spell anarchy. They may spell new and different principles, new and different kinds of order, new and different government; but they do not mean absence of all order or government.

Thus we see that Gandhiji's programme ends one of the oldest forms of social control, and establishes a new and finer type of order and control, based not on fear but on service and love. Satyagraha establishes an entirely new system of values and their appropriate symbols. By resolutely saying no, by diciplined mass Satyagraha, the people of India have learned in only a few months that they can check the most powerful of governments. This gives the masses new hope and self-confidenee. Further use of the same method with all thoroughness will bring complete Swaraj and independence. Not only does Satyagraha do away with fear, but it tends to create harmony, unity and mutual trust among all people. Hence it also tends to weaken the money system by creating

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funds of trust outside the control of banks and governments.

Probably the next most powerful method of control by ruling classes is that of social divisions, grades and distinctions, and playing upon people's vanity and pride by means of social ranks, ceremonial, pomp, glamour, invidious display, titles and the like. What is called "doing honour" to someone of ability is often a part of this. This device is used especially to corrupt and wean away the men and women of ability who rise to leadership of the working class, and thus to deprive the masses of strength and guidance. It is a clever and subtle art and far more powerful and effective than is generally realized. It is used in all countries. We know how in England titles are so prized that they have been purchased by wealthy men contributing money to political party funds. Probably a considerable part of Britain's control of the dominions and colonies is secured by playing upon the social ambitions of their leading men and women. Even in America which is supposed to be relatively free from such snobbery, wives and daughters of wealthy families are much flattered and excited if they can be presented at the British royal court. It is safe to say that a large number of those Americans who are either rich or university graduates would have their vanity gratified if they were asked to dine or have

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tea with an English lord or knight. The British ruling class are aware of this and use this flattery of prestige, this creation and manipulation of superiority and inferiority complexes, to influence American attitudes toward international affairs. The person who is flattered is apt to believe what the flatterer in high position says, to imitate him in one way or another, to look favourably upon what the flatterer suggests whether it be using influence to get something accomplished, withholding approval or action, or what not. The same thing is done in India. This matter of social flattery may be considered one of the "invisible bonds of empire" so often mentioned.

Herein lies the political importance of khadi. In all countries for ages the cut and kind of clothing worn by men or women denotes their social and economic status. In Western countries the absence of a collar and necktie, except at play, denotes the labouring man, as do also certain kinds of clothing. In India the length and quality of the dhoti has social cannotation. All over Europe great stress is laid upon clothing as a sign of social standing. The British insistence upon a special formal dress for evening dinner among people who make any pretense to social position is a stock example. Because of this long and close association between clothing and social position, the wearing of

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khaddar in India has real significance, both social and political. It means that the wearer is either a poor peasant or is in sympathy with the poor masses through the National Congress. The wearing of it is a declaration of independence, a sign of bravery, inner strength, self-reliance, and humility. It is equivalent to saying, "No, I am not open to social flatteries or briberies. I do not care to curry favour with government or with specially influential people. I prefer to work with and for the humble, poor and despised. I am a Gandhi-ite, a Congressman. I prefer Indian culture to that of the West. I do not believe in social distinctions. I will not be separated from the peasants. I want real Swaraj".

But if on the other hand, a man is greatly impressed by Western civilization or British power and looks up to it with admiration, he is apt to want to copy or associate with Europeans, and is apt to wear mill cloth produced by those western-made machines which he respects. By wearing fine mill cloth he is apt to feel more at ease in the presence of Westerners. So his hopes and preferences, conscious or unconscious, or his subtle social aims or inferiority complexes tend to find expression in the clothing he wears.

Because khadi thus has a real meaning, no Indian should feel surprise if European employers or Government officials look with

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disfavour upon khadi. Khadi is not an empty gesture but a real symbol, as are also the charkha and its regular daily use. This element of Gandhiji's programme definitely cuts one of the controls by which the British have maintained their power. This is one of the reasons, I think, why Mahatmaji said, on emerging from prison in 1931, that if the nation would only wholeheartedly adopt khaddar and the charkha, it would bring Swaraj.

The failure to recognize the subtle power of social influence of this sort is one reason why so many labour leaders in many countries have become corrupted and weaned away from their fellow-workers. This desire to associate with socially influential people, to feel a little superior, to be a little more than respectable, has corrupted many leaders of the British Labour party, of the German Socialists, and of the American labour unions. Let no man think that without any aid he is immune to such influences. His very idea that he is incorruptible is an indication of a pride that may sooner or later trip him up.

Mahatmaji's using and promoting the use of charkha, wearing khadi, and his great simplicity of life have been powerful symbols of his unity with the Indian masses. His asceticism is no mere barren, negative affair. It is a true sign of human unity and of the dignity of the poor and humble. It is a

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powerful social and political symbol, and has done much to generate and maintain the trust of the masses in him.

Still another form of control, used with perhaps greater skill by Great Britain than by any other country, is what may be called parliamentarism,—the use of talk and discussion to postpone or delay action, to tire or split opposition, to exhaust the energy of resentment and discontent, to divert or confuse men's minds. Consider for example how much has been obstructed and prevented by Royal Commissions, legislative commissions, committees, investigations, conferences, and by parliaments and legislatures themselves. As long as political life can be confined to talk, most of the steam is blown off or used up by devious procedure and thus no action is taken to disturb the *status quo*. Of course knowledge, discussion and planning are necessary. Of course the affairs of all large organizations are very complex. But nevertheless the principle of divide and rule applies here as well as elsewhere, both to people themselves and to their ideas and feelings. Many a desirable public reform has been defeated by splitting it into many minor issues and examining and debating these separately and thwarting, obscuring or burying one at a time. By referring matters to committees that often sit in private, intrigue and corruption become easy, for in modern governments there is

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much complexity and division of responsibility. Or perhaps while the matter is being delayed by discussion, some of the other three devices of control are being used to modify the situation in favour of the rulers.

The British pride themselves on being politically-minded and tolerant. But perhaps their obsession with politics is only a hugging of one of their chains, and their political tolerance partly a half-conscious recognition by those allied with the rulers of the necessity of maintaining divisions in society and an elaborate play of verbal opposition and conflict in order to obscure realities and to divert people's attention and will from action, and thus control the masses.

Sir Oswald Mosely, leader of an active group of dissidents in Parliament, was reported to have said toward the end of 1930, "I spend most of my life among people who talk about things rather than do them. It is wonderful, the ingenuity of the human mind for finding reasons to postpone or delay action. It is the most powerful factor in modern politics." Members of a legislature discuss not what *they* will do, but what they will have others do or permit others to do. Parliamentarism tends to eliminate or minimize action and is therefore psychologically unhealthy for the legislators and all affected by them.

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The word "constitutional" as applied to methods of reform, usually means an attempt to gain a political majority by means of discussion and persuasion of words, in the press and on the platform and to register and make effective the wishes of that majority through the legislative and executive branches of the government, among the permanent administrative staff of officials, and also through the financial and other economic controlling forces of the country.

Satyagraha includes all that, but it goes further. To the persuasion of words it adds the persuasion of deeds and example, the persuasive force of the sight of courageous men and women so fully convinced of the rightness of their cause that they seek arrest and quietly go to prison or death for their faith. Modern psychologists tell us that much the greater part of our mind is subconscious. If the mind may be likened to a log floating in water, the conscious mind is like the small portion above the level of the water; the subconscious mind is like the greater bulk under the water. Psychologists also tell us that example and suggestion act mainly upon the subconsciousness of the beholder. If this be so, the persuasive power of example by action is much greater than the persuasion of words addressed to the smaller conscious mind. The persuasion of Satyagraha is just as peaceful as that of so-called "constitution-

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al agitation", and it is more potent, swifter, simpler (and therefore better understood by the masses), more direct, more responsible, more sincere, and more lasting. It is less capable of perversion by sinister forces acting in the darkness of legislative committee rooms, or by bureaucratic intrigue. It is less apt to produce a whittling down of public feeling and thwarting of public desire. It is more likely to lead to ultimate mutual respect and trust by and among all parties to any given issue, and to eliminate mistakes on all sides. Mass Satyagraha does not abolish legislatures, committees, investigating bodies and conferences. But it controls them, puts them in their proper place, and renders them less capable of doing harm.

Mahatmaji's programme also implies the active functioning of many small, mostly autonomous units,—the villages. In village councils the evils of parliamentarism are reduced to a minimum. The councillors are known personally by practically all the inhabitants. The discussion and planning are more responsible and healthier because the problems are usually simpler, the details are usually matters of direct personal knowledge of all who discuss them, the real aim is action, and because those who discuss will themselves take part in the resultant action.

Mahatmaji's programme is more of action than of talk. It calls for regular daily spin-

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ning and other social service from every one of those who profess it. It is concrete and psychologically sound. Thought, talk, planning and feeling without corresponding action are psychologically debilitating. Mahatmaji is himself a man of action, and he asks action from all his followers.

By way of summary, we now see that Gandhiji's programme tends strongly to weaken the four chief devices by which the ruling classes have been able to govern and restrain and thwart the masses; namely,

(1) money,
(2) physical violence,
(3) social divisions and flatteries,
(4) parliamentarism.

These four controls are used in different ways and degrees and in different combinations in different countries, but they may all be found in all nations, and to a greater or less degree have weakened and corrupted the masses as well as the middle class intelligentsia in all nations. The existence of these things is of course constantly observed and commented on, but the fact that they are used as controls is seldom realized except in regard to violence and occasionally in part in regard to money. Leaders of reform movements need to realize more clearly how these systems of value and symbols operate.

Herein lies the importance of Gandhiji's

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programme. It uses symbols which heretofore have been little used in political and social movements, and values which are better understood by the masses than by the old ruling classes. For the old symbols the new programme substitutes new symbols that are closer to our modern vision of social realities, and are more adequate to modern purposes. For the old values it substitutes new values that are more true and useful to all mankind. These are only a few of the implications of Mahatmaji's programme, but they are important. The depth and power of the people's response is proof of the soundness of the programme.

It is interesting here to note that the four above-described controls,—money, physical violence, social ranks and flatteries, and parliamentarism,—all are divisive in effect. They all tend, sooner, or later, to create and maintain separation, selfishness, jealousy, mistrust, dislike, and eventually fear and hatred between different individuals, groups, classes, nations and races. Because selfishness is itself divisive, selfish government must inevitably use devices and methods that embody the principle of divide and rule. It is a subtle art, this taking advantage of natural human hopes and instincts, of slight and healthy divergencies and differences; playing upon them, stirring up one person, group or community against another, creating

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mutual jealousies and fears. But once these methods and devices for social control are understood by a follower of Mahatmaji's programme, he need feel no anger or resentment. His former tendency to anger was a sign of inner confusion, of attachment to certain of these values, and consequent helplessness and inner conflict.

He was bound by his own lack of understanding, his own weakness and inability to create an effective method of enfranchisement. Now, thanks to Mahatmaji's genius, his followers can conquer by their own understanding and self-developed inner strength. And such a conquest helps everyone, even the opponent, to a finer life.

Having thus considered the meaning of Gandhiji's programme, how does it compare with Socialism?

Socialism resembles Gandhism in having as its motive the service of the common man and the producing of more social and economic justice and equality than has generally prevailed in the world. Both movements call for devoted hard work from everyone. Neither of them is merely palliative. Socialism is, like Gandhism, a fresh system of values. Furthermore, the most successful leaders of Socialism, such as Lenin, Trotsky and Stalin, have, like Gandhiji, led lives of austere simplicity, and thus, as well as by

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means of their work for the common good, created trust among the common people.

Socialism has weakened the money system, just as Gandhism is doing, by tending to create sources and modes of trust and credit outside the money system. Socialism, through its doctrine of equality, seeks to end the divisions of society and the social flatteries and systems of prestige and distinction. In this respect also it resembles Gandhism. In Russia the Soviet form of organization and the intense activity of everyone have perhaps reduced the evils of parliamentarism to a minimum. But parliamentarism is not a device much used in a dictatorship, and was not much used in old Tsarist Russia, either. Both Gandhism and Socialism have released and given expression to the repressed hopes of many generations of hundreds of millions of submerged peoples. Both movements have enabled the masses to feel their own power, and have thus increased their self-confidence. Hence these two movements have vast momentum and power.

But Gandhism is, in my judgment, more effective, more powerful, and in other ways superior to Socialism. It alters the old controls more efficiently and completely and offers a finer basis for a new society.

In the first place, Socialism, especially as exemplified in Russia, clings to military and

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police violence and their symbols, as a prime control of society. Gandhism would abolish this control, and by so doing will create more trust and a finer and richer quality of trust than Socialism or Communism has done.* Despite the immense fund of trust evolved within the Soviet system, that system has aroused, from its beginning, both in Russia and in other countries, more fears and hatred of itself than has Gandhism in its own and other countries. That is chiefly due to the violence of the Communists, I believe, though they would say it is because of the efficiency of the Soviets in destroying capitalism in Russia. Some Socialists may protest that they do not believe in violence, but no Socialist party in power has yet given adequate proof of such belief.

Secondly, Gandhism, through the wearing of khaddar and the use of charkha, attacks the old social gradations and controls of flattery and distinction more subtly and directly and powerfully, because through symbolism, than does Socialism. It is true that all people dress simply in Russia. Yet we have not heard of simple coarse clothing being advocated as a conscious symbol of social unity in Russia. Simple clothing seems to have been worn there from poverty and dire necessity, but apparently its symbolic value is not fully appreciated. And among

*See my *Gandhiji's Satyagraha*, Ganesan. Madras, 1930.

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the Socialists of Germany and Great Britain there has been apparently little or no recognition of the connection between clothing and social position, between clothing and social flattery and control by the "upper" classes. This oversight has been one element in the failure of Socialism in those countries. Indeed, in Germany and England, Socialists have made no effective changes in any of the old four forms of control described above,—money, violence, social rank, and parliamentarism. I believe it is for this reason that Socialism, outside of Russia, has been so weak. The Russian Communists have preached hatred of the old ruling classes, and used that hatred as a means of aiding in the abolition of classes. Khadi is superior, in that it operates through love and pity of the poor, rather than through hatred of the rich. Love is more productive of social trust than is hatred.

Gandhism is superior to Socialism in providing for every person a common daily form of social service to help directly toward creating a new social and economic order; namely, hand-spinning and its associated activities. Old and young, men and women, rich and poor, city folk and country folk, educated and ignorant,—all can and are urged to take part in this. This common activity is psychologically wise. It recognizes that new habits and attitudes must be built

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up gradually by small stimuli regularly repeated for many months at least. This is the organic law of all growth. Action as well as talk is necessary to a full and strong understanding and to the development of the implications of any idea. For instance, one cannot really understand algebra or the activities that use algebra until one has actually and pains-takingly, with his own fingers and pencil, written all the little figures involved in hundreds or thousands of algebraic problems. Gandhiji's programme provides an immediate channel for the social goodwill of everyone, without interfering at all with other forms of social service. It provides a common bond between all groups. It tends to heal the deepest of all social divisions, between the rich and the poor. It is more than a mere gesture or symbol; it has definite, concrete and momentous economic value also.*

Again, the khaddar and charkha programme surpasses Socialism for India because it provides immediate economic relief to the poor masses and paves the way for many other forms of economic relief, whereas the changes contemplated by Socialism would take longer to get into action.† This is not to decry the great importance and value of reforms of land laws, taxation, industry,

* & † See my *Economics of Khaddar* (2nd edition), Ganesan, Madras, 1931. As. 12.

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conditions of labour, education, and government organization, all of which are inherent in Socialism and which are now a part of the Congress programme. Socialism stresses the abolition of certain kinds of private property. No doubt, private property is a system of values which is very powerful and divisive in operation, and perhaps in respect to certain things it ought to be added to our list of controls. But Gandhiji himself seems to advocate strict regulation of industrial private property, and dedication to public use rather than its abolition. Apparently he relies upon mass Satyagraha to control those who try to misuse private property. We may admit the value of all these Socialist proposals, and yet add that they alone are not enough, and indeed probably cannot be attained and preserved without these other subtler psychological changes.

It seems to me that Mahatmaji's emphasis on small-scale, largely autonomous organizations (villages) is in the long run sounder, at least for India, than the large, highly centralized governmental organizations of the Russian sort. Socialism in general relies on large, strongly centralized organization. Small-scale economic organization and marketing will, I believe, control the cost element in prices more effectively than the devices proposed by the Socialists. Mahatmaji's whole programme tends to promote a

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sound balance between industry and agriculture.*

Gandhism is more effective than Socialism because Gandhiji's programme involves specific, practical economic organization and work along with and even before political organization and work. In the Socialist programme, on the other hand, essential economic reforms mostly have to wait until after the attainment of political power, and so up to that time the chief efforts of Socialists are political. What economic changes they have achieved in Great Britain and Germany are in the nature of palliatives only. Inasmuch as Marxians insist and others are admitting that a large part of political power grows out of and depends upon economic power, this feature of Gandhiji's programme is important. The peasants show political trust toward those who have unselfishly rendered them tangible economic service.

Lastly, Gandhism is, for India, superior to Socialism because it is an indigenous Indian growth, evolved by an Indian mind and heart, truly Swadeshi. Its concepts, symbolism and methods are more closely adapted than Socialism to the circumstances and habitual modes of feeling, thinking and action of the great mass of the Indian people. It is the Indian masses, in the end, who must adopt, operate, and use any social system

* See my "*Economics of Khaddar*" above cited.

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whatever in India. Socialism is a product of the West and therefore, in psychological mode and outer manner, adapted to the West.

It might be urged that Socialism is superior because it has a definite concrete plan for the organization of society. But inasmuch as structure or organization is a resultant, exterior expression of inner purpose or function; and inasmuch as in human affairs the end is always controlled by and partakes of the character of the means, it seems to me to be a mistake to try to evolve far in advance a detailed, rigid, architectural plan of society; then work to attain political control; and when attained think that you can clamp the plan down upon society. I do not want to emphasize unfairly the doctrinaire tendency of Socialism, but the argument beginning this paragraph does involve such a tendency. In society, as in any growing organism, each stage or attainment grows organically out of the preceding stage with all its factors, and necessarily partakes of the character of the preceding stage and the means used in making the change. This is because people's thinking and feeling and attitudes are continuous and cannot suddenly and completely change their character. I do not mean by this that exterior social political or economic changes must therefore always be slow. They are sometimes swift. But

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because of the above fact, it is of enormous importance that right methods and means should be used in making a change, because they will largely determine the character of the result. They determine the character of the result far more than does any intellectual plan of organization evolved in advance. If a revolution is attained by violence, the old violence values and use of violence as a control will be found in the resulting government, and will eventually find their way into the hands of the group who are specially skilled in the use of violence. The same holds true of all the other three devices of social control. New methods are needed even more than a new plan or aim. It is the failure to see this fact which has time and again dashed the hopes of idealists and social reformers all over the word.

Hence, the eventual structure of the State under Gandhism will and must grow out of the circumstances at the time when India attains freedom and out of the nature of the methods and means used in attaining that end. These circumstances cannot be predicted in advance, and so to try to create a detailed, rigid form and structure ahead of time and to hope to get the country to adopt it after freedom is attained, would be a waste of energy.

So it seems to me that the valuations, methods and symbols of Gandhiji's pro-

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gramme are more important and valuable than the perhaps more definite and rigid plan of organization proposed by Socialism. Appropriate symbols rouse and carry more energy than any plan of organization by itself. The control exercised by a system of values and symbols is more profound, powerful and lasting, especially among Indian peasants, than the exterior control of press, radio, telegraphs, railways and other mechanical means of communication and transport. The American, Lincoln Steffens, believes that economic privilege has been the arch-corrupter of governments and of society. But false values and inadequate and ambiguous symbols seem to me to lie behind and deeper and to be more powerful even than economic privilege. Gandhism is psychologically wiser and more effective than Socialism.

As the two systems stand today, it is easier for Gandhism to select, adopt and use the important parts of the programme of Socialism than it is for Socialism to adopt the important parts of Gandhism. Thus, of the two systems, Gandhism seems the more flexible and comprehensive, and therefore probably more lasting. It is not that I am hostile to Socialism. But I do think that Gandhism, for India anyhow, is still better. Most of what I have said applies to the relations between classes in all countries.

The foregoing is far from being a com-

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plete discussion of Socialism, of Gandhism, of money, or of anything else. Nevertheless, the factors here considered are worth thinking about. Some may say that Gandhism seems to be an Indian form of Socialism. The name is perhaps not important. My point is that Gandhism seems more effective, for India anyhow, than Western forms of Socialism.

Thus it seems that the present is a time when not only exterior circumstances are changing but also that we are in the midst of a change of inner systems of values and of the symbols that go with them. That will indeed be a real revolution.

RICHARD B. GREGG.

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